



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 03/22/2011**

*Approved by the Arlington School Committee April 26, 2011*

*The Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, March 22, 2011  
7:30 p.m.  
Meeting to be held in the  
School Committee Room, 6th Floor*

*Present: Present: Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Joseph Curran, Dr. Kirsy Allison-Ampe and Mr. Judson Pierce.*

*Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Linda Hanson, AEA Representative and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.*

*Absent: Dr. Wallis Raemer, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education, AAA Representative, Student Representative*

*Ms. Heigham exited the meeting at 9:00 p.m. and returned at 9:03p.m.*

*Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 9:04 and returned at 9:05 p.m.*

### *Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition*

*Mr. Joseph Curro, Remembrance tonight was for Mr. Brian Greeley, Chair, Arlington Housing Authority and APS Parent who suddenly passed away and for the victims of the Japanese disasters and their families. Mr. Curro asked for a brief moment of silence.*

*Mr. Curro held recognition for Arlington High School Jazz Band members directed by Mr. Sabatino D'Agostino. Mr. Curro and Dr. Bodie presented a Certificate of Achievement to MVP student Otto Briner. Dr. Bodie and Mr. Skidmore spoke about Arlington Public Schools being named to the College Board High School Recognition AP Achievement list.*

*Mr. Curro presented Mr. Curran with the Massachusetts Associations of School Committee plaque and thanked him for his years of service to Arlington Public Schools as a School Committee Member.*

*Mr. Curro reflected on the lows and highs from the year with the following Year in Review*

*Lows: Budget: Continual Cuts, Last Year and This, METCO, ACE, Drama, Kindergarten, Controversy over the Pledge of Allegiance, \$1.5 million budget shortfall, consumed much of the fall, Strains surrounding athletic fee schedule, and Labor tensions.*

*Highs: Working with Bridge the Gap to raise \$600K for schools (including Storybook), Stratton National Blue Ribbon Award, Celebrations of Students: Arlington High School Jazz Band, Cheerleaders to Gator Bowl, Wrestling and Cross-Country Stars, Anti-Tobacco Poster Winners, Ottoson First Lego League, All-Elementary Chorus, Focus Media (ACMI), "Oldest Student": Presentation of Diploma to Mr. Sheehan, Community connections: Nagaokakyo, FY Arlington (Arlington FY 11), ACMI, Robbins Farm Community Garden, Transportation Advisory Committee, Human Rights Commission, Support for MLK dinner, Pop Warner, Sudanese Education Foundation, Bishop Cooperative Theater, FIRST, Stand Against Racism.*

*Achievements: Resolution of Pledge of Allegiance controversy through policy, Successful passage of anti-bullying policy, Execution of inclusive budget process, Opposition to damaging tax rollbacks, First change of labor counsel in 40 years, Initiation of process audit, with significant progress on most recommendations of this and financial audit and credit to CFO and staff), including: Monthly reports, Cost center organization of budget with three different views, Monthly meetings between CFO, Comptroller, Deputy Town Manager, SEPAC liaison and cooperation, AAA/AEA reps join us at the table, Navigation of athletic fee controversy by inviting concerned parties to form advisory committee and work with us, resulting in improvements for our students. Permanent surplus of Crosby and Parmenter as part of Thompson Rebuild financing -- for years, this had never happened. Progress on Thompson rebuild through feasibility and design phases, looking more like reality -- two expressions of support from Town Meeting: Worked on multi-year financial plan, forwarded to Board of Selectmen, provide choices to voters regarding securing of funding going forward.*

*Many other District achievements, including Teaching American History, commendation school designation, college placement, other accomplishments celebrated there.*

*Mr. Curro thanked individual School Committee members and the Administration. Mr. Curro ended the Year in Review with reference of the Wizard of Oz play, we all have Brains, Heart, and Courage and believed there is No Place Like Home.*

**Public Participation** (Per File BEDH, Arlington School Committee Policy Manual)

*Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.*

*Issues requiring extensive discussion may be deferred to a future meeting with a s scheduled agenda item.*

*All remarks will be addressed through the chairperson of the meeting.*

*Mr. Stephen J. Gilligan, Treasurer & Collector of Taxes handed out a memorandum and spoke on his opposition to Warrant Article 51, to Vote/Implementation of consolidated Town-School Finance Department.*

*Mr. Paul Morrison, Stratton School Council member and parent was here tonight to make sure Stratton stays on the agenda and that parents had trepidations with combining Thompson School Principal with Stratton.*

*Mr. Michael Carta congratulated Mr. Curro with his Year in Review, Mr. Skidmore's presentation with AP/SAT achievements and the jazz band students and reminded everyone teachers are the ones in front of each of these students every day. Mr. Carta had asked if the Early Retirement Proposal could be thought of as a job initiative program because it would be saving jobs. Mr. Carta spoke about the job description of Library Media, which was scheduled to be on the agenda but taken off and said he was confused because he reminded the committee we have people qualified with certification to fill the Library Media Specialist position.*

**Early Retirement Proposal**

*Dr. Kathleen Bodie presented the Early Retirement Proposal to the School Committee members and said she created this as an incentive to save positions.*

*Mr. Curran asked if Dr. Bodie discussed the percentage with the union and encouraged her to increase the Memorandum of Agreement to receive a lump sum payment from eight percent of their 2010-2011 base salary to the ten percent, which was given last year and said it could generate more takers. Dr. Allison-Ampe suggested that Dr. Bodie speak with the Town Manager and see if he would add any money incentive to this plan. Mr. Thielman suggested voting the motion and have Dr. Bodie present the Memorandum of Agreement to the Union. The School Committee could always modify the plan if additional analysis warrants this. Ms. Heigham would like to rename this as Early Retirement Notice Incentive Program for 2011.*

***Ms. Heigham moved to endorse the Early Retirement Memorandum of Agreement Proposal, seconded by Mr. Curran.***

***Voted: 7-0***

**Opening of School Year 2011- 2012**

*Dr. Kathleen Bodie presented the draft 2011-2012 School calendar and requested the School Committee to vote only for the opening of school year 2011 as September 8, 2011.*

***Mr. Pierce moved to approve the Opening Day of School Year 2011-2012, seconded by Dr. Allison-Ampe.***

*After discussion, the committee suggested that more discussion is needed between the union and the administration.*

**Mr. Pierce withdrew the motion.**

*First Reading*

- *File IHB: SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS*

*Mr. Pierce read the policy IHB and said the SEPAC Chair would like additional work done on the policy. Mr. Pierce will hold a meeting next week with the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee members to continue working on the policy.*

*Recess 9:05 – 9:15 p.m.*

*Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrant Review*

*Mr. Curro said no votes are needed on the following Warrant Articles but would accept motions.*

- *Annual Town Meeting*
  - *Article 17: Zoning Bylaw Amendment/Outdoor Advertising at Peirce Field*

*Mr. Curro spoke about the Warrant Article Mr. Dever presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals and it was confirmed that the School Committee moved and approved support of the Warrant Article on January 11, 2011*

***Ms. Heigham moved to support Article 23: Bylaw Amendment/Sidewalk Snow Removal Enforcement, seconded by Mr. Curran***  
***Voted: 7-0***

*Ms. Johnson does not support this Article 24: Bylaw Amendment/Massachusetts Public Records Law. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen voted No Action.*

*Article 30: Exemption of Newly Hired Non-Public-Safety Town Employees from Civil Service*

*Ms. Hanson read a statement not supporting Article 31: Home Rule Legislation/Group Insurance Commission. Ms. Heigham said given the School Committee is still in negotiations they should not undermine negotiations with the union.*

*Dr. Allison-Amp does not agree with the wording of this Article 32: Home Rule Legislation/Group Insurance Commission Health Reimbursement Accounts.*

***Mr. Thielman moved to support Article 36: Transfer of Real Estate/23 Maple Street, seconded by Mr. Curran.***  
***Voted: 5-2, Dr. Allison-Ampe and Ms. Starks voted No***

***Mr. Thielman moved to support Article 37: Disposition of Real Estate/23 Maple Street, seconded by Mr. Curran.***

***Voted: 4-3, Dr. Allison-Ampe, Ms. Starks, and Ms. Heigham voted No***

***Mr. Thielman moved to support Article 38: Disposition of Real Estate/Parmenter School, seconded by Mr. Curran.***

***Voted: 7-0***

***Mr. Thielman moved to support Article 39: Disposition of Real Estate/Crosby School, seconded by Ms. Starks.***  
***Voted: 7-0***

*It was suggested to hold off voting on Articles 43, 44, 45, 47, and 48 and No position on Article 49 and it was suggested to run language by legal on Article 51 before voting this article.*

*Article 43: Vote/Annual Reserve Fund.*

*Article 44: Amend Town Manager Act/Consolidated Town-School Human Resource Department*

Article 45: Bylaw Amendment/Consolidated Town-School Human Resource Department  
Article 47: Amend Town Manager Act/Budget Submissions  
Article 48: Bylaw Amendment/Budget Submissions  
Article 49: Create Committee for Long Term Financial Planning  
Article 50: Vote/Extend Town Reorganization Committee of 2009  
Article 51: Vote/Implementation of Consolidated Town-School Finance Department

#### *Special Town Meeting*

**Mr. Thielman moved to support Article 3: Appropriation/Arlington High School Repair, Article 4: Capital Budget/Stratton School, Article 5: Capital Budget/Thompson School, and Article 6: Appropriation/Unpaid Bills from Previous Fiscal Years, seconded by Ms. Starks.  
Voted: 7-0**

*Consent Agenda - All items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.*

*Approval of Warrant # 11123 Total Warrant Amount \$ 218,579.45 dated March 8, 2011.*

- *Approval of Special School Committee Meeting, Monday, March 28, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at Jefferson Cutter House, Executive Session*
- *Approval of Penn Model Congress Trip- March 2011*
- *Approval of Special Permit to Zoning Board of Appeals for installing advertising signage.*

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Starks.  
Voted: 7-0**

#### *Secretary's Report*

*Ms. Starks reported on all correspondence received over the past few months*

- *several emails from parents with questions and concerns about the Thompson rebuild and student displacement*
- *email from a parent about potential grants for the APS*
- *email informing us of the burst pipe causing flooding at the high school and subsequent emails informing us of the remediation of said flood*
- *Letter from Juliana Rice to the school committee regarding the challenge to user fees for athletic participation as well as a copy of her correspondence to help her answer that question to the Chief of the Municipal Finance Law Bureau*
- *copy of the Athletics Advisory Committee report to the school committee dated 3/1/2011*
- *notification of the passing of Peggy Graham, a retired AHS teacher*
- *copy of a cover letter to someone requesting the employment contracts of Dr. Bodie & Ms. Johnson*
- *copy of email sent to teachers by superintendent Bodie about the budget and inviting them to come and discuss it with her*
- *copy of the letter sent to Thompson parents about the future of Thompson from superintendent Bodie*
- *copy of the letter sent to Stratton parents from superintendent Bodie about the principal there*
- *document elaborating on the reduced resources in the APS through Fy11*
- *monthly enrollment numbers in the APS dated 2/1/2011*
- *copy of the APS legal expenses to date for FY11*
- *copy of a letter from George Edwards, Assoc. Director of the New England Association of Schools & colleges commission on public secondary schools about concerns with the lack of librarian at AHS and the cost of sports fees and requesting an update on these issues by August 2011*
- *copies of the approved minutes of the policies & procedures subcommittee dated 1/19/2011 & 2/8/2011*
- *copies of 4 letters from the MSBA:*
  - *1 to Diane Mahon, Chair of BOS, reporting that the Thompson school has proceeded into schematic design*
  - *1 to Brian Sullivan, TM, with the fully executed feasibility study agreement for the Thompson and instructions or entering project budgets into the system*
  - *2 to superintendent Bodie, one on the design enrollment certification for the Thompson and one forwarding review comments of the preferred schematic*
- *notice of the Vietnam Moving Wall coming to Arlington April 14-18, 2011*
- *announcement of high school state champions in wrestling and running as well as an update on girls basketball, boys*

basketball, swimmers who qualified for states, cross country finishers, and girls hockey  
 - copy of the Brackett school newsletter dated 2/28/2011 & 3/7/2011  
 - announcement of a parent death in the Hardy community  
 - client advisory from Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane regarding new ADA regulations regarding the presence and use of service animals in schools  
 - MASC guidelines on policies for service animals in schools, students transferring from commonwealth charter schools, and concussions/head injuries  
 - announcement of the MASC charting the course orientation program to be held on Saturday, March 12, 2011  
 - copy of Winter 2011 news from ACMI  
 - copy of letter from the SC to Juliana Rice (town counsel) accompanying athletic advisory documents sent to her  
 - copy of a letter from chairman Curro to Carol Kowalski informing her of our vote to endorse the CDBG block grant funding application submitted by the athletic advisory committee  
 - copy of a letter from chairman Curro to chairwoman Mahon offering our assistance and interest in helping to support activities to raise awareness of the financial crisis facing Arlington  
 - copy of a letter from chairman Curro to Ron Colosi (union president) about changes to the calendar for this school year  
 - copy of a letter from a concerned APS employee about the executive session called to discuss possible reprimanding of superintendent Bodie  
 - email from a concerned Arlington resident about reprimanding the superintendent  
 - email from a concerned Arlington resident about combining the school and town finance offices  
 - email from a parent desiring a fair assessment of fees and program cuts across the district  
 - AHS email update dated March 6, 2011  
 - email informing us about the congratulations due the AHS Jazz Band for their wins at the Berklee High School Jazz Festival on 3/5/2011  
 - email about an exhibit of student work by visual art students through March 11, 2011 in the Gibbs Gallery at the Arlington Center for the Arts at 41 Foster Street  
 - email informing us of Mr. Ryder's decision to take another position  
 - letter from several members of the administrative team at APS in support of Superintendent Bodie and their disappointment in our vote to hold a disciplinary hearing  
 - notification email of the AHS evacuation on 3/14/2011 (Pi Day) due to smoke  
 - reminder of the MASC Day on the Hill to be held Tuesday, March 29, 2011  
 - invitation to last Friday's Art Night at Peirce  
 - emails and information surrounding the gas smells at Ottoson Middle School  
 - copy of the Brackett School newsletter dated March 14, 2011  
 - copy of the outcome of American Arbitration Association case number 11 390 01286 10 in the matter of students assigned to guidance counselors at Ottoson Middle School  
 - copy of the draft project schedule for the Thompson Elementary School  
 - copy of the March 2011 edition of the Ponder Report  
 - email in thanks and appreciation from the Director of Metco, Stephen Pereira for the outpouring of support and generosity that Arlington has shown to the Rivera/Andrade Family in their time of need  
 - email from Stephen Pereira as president of AAA with an addendum to a letter sent to the SC in support of superintendent Bodie  
 - letter from the DESE giving us feedback on our district Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan - I want to note that our plan had all the required pieces

### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie addressed the Stratton / Thompson School request from Mr. Morrison and said she had meet with parents to hear questions and concerns. Dr. Bodie said on May 9, Town Meeting would decide on Thompson School \$20 million project, and then Dr. Bodie would decide where to relocate the Thompson students but if no funding were voted then students would not be relocated. Discussion from the members around the uncertainties of Stratton and Thompson School were brought to the table but will have to wait to see how Pay as you Throw or the Override goes also.

Dr. Bodie said the Ottoson Middle School performed Music Man; Arlington High School presents Beauty and the Beast this weekend and appreciated the Jazz Band's performance at the State House last week.

### Roundtable

The School Committee members thanked Mr. Curran for his years of service and he thanked each member for their dedication. Mr. Curran said he would pray for and wished Dr. Bodie and Ms. Johnson well.

Members also thanked Mr. Curro as Chair, Ms. Heigham as Vice Chair and Ms. Starks as Secretary. Mr. Curro said

for school year 2011-201 Ms. Starks would become Chair, Dr. Allison-Ampe would become Vice Chair and Mr. Pierce would become Secretary of the School Committee.

Executive Session

**Ms. Heigham moved to enter Executive Session at 10:40 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation when an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the committee. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, or to conduct collect bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, and To review Executive Session minutes, and to exit only for adjournment, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce Yes, Dr. Allison-Ampe Yes, Mr. Curran Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes**

**Voted: 7-0**

Adjournment

**Ms. Heigham moved to adjourn at 11 p.m., seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Respectfully submitted by  
Ms. Karen M. Fitzgerald  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee/cs